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MADRID.

ON a bright sunny morning in December, I was sitting quietly sipping a cup of chocolate in the cheerful coffee-room of the Hotel de la Paix (Fonda del Paz), which looks out on the Puerta del Sol, the great central plaza of Madrid, when I was accosted by a newly-arrived traveler and an old friend, Professor Savorin, of Ohio. He had reached Madrid two days before, and had already visited the Royal Palace, the Armory, the Buen Retiro, and the Museum of the Prado. He proposed that we should go together to the Gallery. We started at once. As we stepped out into the sunlit plaza, the air was soft and balmy. The streets were running with rivers of water and melting snow, which the authorities were washing away from the hydrants by means of a hose, the supply of water being abundant. Two days previously the streets were impassable for vehicles, eight inches of snow having fallen in a night, an amount so unusual that all the cabs, carriages, and even the tramways were stopped, and groups of people were gaping with astonishment at the sight. We sprang into a cab, were driven rapidly down the Carrera San Geronimo, past the Chamber of Deputies, the Fountain of Neptune, and along the spacious Alameda. We were soon at the entrance of the great Art Gallery. We sauntered on, occasionally stopping to observe some masterpiece. Presently we entered the Italian part of the long gallery. "Look, Professor, at that portrait of an old man; how thoughtful, venerable and life-like it is?" "It does not strike me so," he said; "to me it looks rather dull, monotonous and indistinct; yet, as I look longer, it grows on me. I confess it has something of the calm, contemplative expression of a very old man." "My dear Savorin," cried I, "come a little further back; you are too near to get the entire effect; observe the subdued color of the flesh; see how the modeling is all there, but so unobtrusively expressed; the eye and brow show the calm repose of age, after a life of enthusiastic study. How simple and unaffected is the attitude; what a sober richness in the coloring? It seems to me that he must presently turn and fix his gently-observant eye on us—it is a portrait of Titian, by himself, painted when about 80 years old." "I begin to see what you describe," replied the Professor; "I am not quite up to it yet; I am afraid I like more dash, more contrast, brilliancy and sparkle. For example, look at that Rubens; how it gleams, the flesh is full of blood, the shadows are ruddy, brown and juicy; the handling is so spirited you can see the very daring flourishes of the brush; it is all alive with movement. I enjoy all that; don't you?" Of course, I do; it is wonderfully brilliant and effective. You are surprised by the facility and splendor of this great Fleming, but with all his power, he is often careless and faulty; he lacks delicacy; is sometimes coarse. The character is always strong, but often overdrawn; his women are not only fat, but frequently gross; his Satyrs, glowing with the rich brown of the forests, squeeze and kiss the rollicksome Bacchantes with beastly fury. In sacred subjects he seeks to gratify the eye by splendor of color and imposing contrasts and effects, rather than by true expression and the

solemnity and dignity belonging to the subject. But who has so forcibly painted the cunning, the malignity, the sensuality and hypocrisy of the Pharisaic tempters of Our Lord? In spite of his faults, we are forced to admire him; he is a wonderful fellow, and reigns supreme in the realm of florid magnificence. In the copies he made of Venitian pictures he introduced always his own peculiarities; there is a Rubens flavor about them all. The copy yonder of Titian's Temptation of Eve, is a marked instance. Comparing it with the original, in the other room, you will find how skillfully done it is, the general hue of the flesh rendered well, but with heightened tints, and in the heads and accessories several variations, making it rather a free translation than a copy. The portrait of Charles V you are looking at, is one of Titian's famous works; it is a powerful and spirited picture; the horse is fiery and in full motion, but it is not a great horse, though the action suits the subject—rushing into battle. In Venice there was no need of horses, and little opportunity to study them. As you examined yesterday, at the Armory, the very suit of armor which Titian has painted in this portrait, you can judge with what force and truth he has represented it, even to the details of the golden ornamentation; and yet, this simple breadth of general effect is perfectly preserved. The head of the Emperor, however, is the great point of interest. The cool, determined courage, the earnest deadly intent, the eagle eye piercing to the future of conquest, and the insatiable thirst for dominion, are all there. Titian has modeled the head, partly shaded by the helmet, with great force, almost severely, and the low rich color has a silvery vein running through it, sobering its depths of golden warmth."

At that moment we came to the famous Venus, with the figure of a young man playing on an organ. "Tell me," said the Professor, "if you like that female figure; it appears to me of a pallid yellow tint; it lacks the rosy hue of health; and where is the modesty of reclining on that soft white drapery, dispensing with all other robes, as though the unconscious innocence of Eden had come back; and what business has that young cavalier, in the full costume of Titian's day, to be coolly playing the organ, in such luxurious society, with an air of calm indifference, as though a beautiful woman without a rag, was an everyday affair; pray, what is the moral which this great prince of painters intended to teach?" "My dear Savorin," I said, "we are not here to sit in judgment on the moral intentions of Titian; he surely had a decided moral motive in some of his works, but in this picture he was bent only, I should say, in expressing the most bewitching beauty of the female form, the loveliness of truthful and harmonious coloring, and the delicate flow and gradations of light and shadow. That he has succeeded wonderfully in his purpose, the longer you study this work the more completely you will be convinced. There is a delicacy and refinement in the color of the flesh, and a suavity in the flow of light as it is diffused over the figure, in scarcely perceptible gradations, revealing the forms by a modeling so subtle as to escape scrutiny. The shadows are massed with great breadth, but are not flat and vacant blots; for, as you look, the forms

are faintly seen within them. These are traits of a high order. The glow and richness of color in Titian, are tempered by a pearliness which pervades them even to the deepest golden and amber tones. There is a reserved strength, a sobered splendor, enthusiasm and imagination controlled by judgment, which stamp him as truly great, and give the senatorial dignity so often noted in his art."

We strolled towards the Sala de Isabel, the large square room where are collected several masterpieces from the various schools. In passing, I called Savorin's attention to the famous "Spasimo," by Raphael. "Doubtless, it is a very great picture," he said; "but, it is too 'high' for me; many acknowledged masterpieces of High Art fail to interest me. I see that the expression of sorrow and sympathy is strongly portrayed in the face of our Saviour; the lines of the composition are grand, the story is told clearly, the draperies are dignified; but yet the effect is harsh, the outlines are cutting, the coloring is bricky, the shadows are brown and opaque." "There is reason in your criticism," I replied. "The picture was probably painted on a dark ground, and its transfer from panel to canvas, though necessary to save it from ruin, has probably darkened the tints. The outlines are severe, but their precision gives firmness; the coloring, though sombre, agrees with the sadness and terror of the scene; the group of broken-hearted women is affecting; the cruelty of the soldiers and the cold sternness of the Roman Centurian are forcibly expressed. Though not a pleasing picture, it has great and noble character, and is worthy of the exalted mind and feeling heart of Raphael. The engraving of this picture, by Toschi, is admirable." The Professor smiled, saying, "perhaps I shall come to it some day, but meantime, give me more of the nature and life I see around me. There, for example, in that group of peasants drinking, by Velasquez. They are alive; they stand out as real as that beautiful black-eyed girl who is copying it. She has caught the jolly expression of some and the mock solemnity of others, but she has not got the brilliant, though modest, flesh colors of the half-naked youth who plays the Bacchus. But to catch this marvelous truth of Velasquez in painting the flesh, is given to few. See how he has painted that brimming bowl of wine, which makes your lips to smack. And then how easily and decidedly all is done. Velasquez is the master for me."

A few steps farther and we came to a full-length of a man in armor. Who is that?" inquired Savorin. "He looks like a prince; his suit of armor is rich and elaborately inlaid; he has an air of dignity and command, and a very serious and thoughtful look. Perhaps there is something sinister in his glance, and about the mouth a touch of cruelty and sensuality. There is a pallid hue in his face as of an invalid and a student; the eye, penetrating and crafty, seems to fasten on you with the malicious charm of a serpent. The armor and accessories are carefully finished, the general coloring is harmonious and warm, though I should say it was somewhat faded." "I am glad you like that portrait so well," I said, "for it is Philip 2d, by Titian, and I believe one of the best portraits in the world. Titian has fully grasped the character and rendered it with great pre-

cision. As an example of his method of treating a portrait, you will observe a certain breadth and simplicity of light, shade and color, while the details, which properly belong to the subject, are faithfully painted with inimitable truth and even elaboration, without the loss of that vigor of touch and broad massive style of which he was so great a master. There are two other pictures by him in this great room, which you should observe carefully, as they are among the most pleasing of his compositions. One is the Bacchanal, a group of many figures, Ariade asleep, surrounded by youths and nymphs dancing and pouring libations. This is a glowing picture, remarkable for the luminous coloring of flesh. On the opposite wall of this room hangs one of the loveliest of all Titian's creations. A crowd of cupids sporting in all imaginable attitudes and making offerings to the Goddess of Love, whose statue is before them. The playful, child-like motions, the beautiful faces, the fresh warm color, make this one of the most fascinating pictures in the world. The execution is marvelously skillful."

We were just turning to examine a nativity—a Worship of the Shepherds, by Murillo—when a young artist, who was engaged in the room on a sketch from Velasquez's group of St. Anthony and the Hermit Paul, said to us: "What a lot of feeble rubbish there is in this Collection. These soft, overdone, highly-finished things are awfully stupid and old-fashioned. Even these Titians, Murillos and Raphaels, are fearfully overrated. There is no touch, no grit, too much slow work; that kind of thing won't go down much longer. I like something which gives you the *impression* with one or two bold dashes. Look at that bit of drapery, for instance, in the St. Anthony. There are, one, two, plucky sweeps of the brush, and the thing is done. See how ridiculously exact Titian has been in that full-length of Charles V, making out the very figures of the embroidery on his vest. I can't stand that kind of rubbish. If one can't be fearless and knock off a spirited suggestion by a stroke of the brush, why then, I say, let him back down and go into something else." "My dear young friend," said I, "that bold, rapid, effective way may do wonderful things in a master of long and careful experience, whose thorough training has given certainty to his eye and hand; every touch tells in his bold work, and the essential truth is suggested if not completely expressed, as in this superb sketch by Velasquez, from which you are copying a bit of drapery, but in a beginner, a student, it is only bravado and unmeaning flourish, and will end in worthless trash." The student looked angry, and the professor, wishing to end the discussion, broke in with "What a striking portrait is that which hangs near 'The Drinkers,' that man in black who is modeling a bust. What a fine manly head; what an eye of thought and speculation looking out from the shade of those ponderous brows. His clearly cut nose is one which Napoleon would have liked for a marshal; his crisp grey mustache and pointed beard does not quite hide a mouth, determined, but about to speak a kindly word. There is a real living man, and how vigorously and freely every part is done. Who is it, and what great painter did it?" "It is by Velasquez, and considered one of his best as it is one of his latest. The head is mod-

eled with decision and solidity, the color is fresh and harmonious, the relief is powerful, the expression full of life and thought. It is generally believed to be a portrait of Alonzo Cano, who was painter, sculptor and architect. Don Pedro de Madrazo in his recent catalogue, says it is an error to call it Alonzo Cano, and pronounces it to be Montañes, who was one of the ablest sculptors of those life-like figures of saints which enrich the churches of Spain. Cano was his pupil, and they were equally celebrated for the naturalness and vivacity of their productions, mostly carved in wood, painted and adorned with gilded and figured draperies, but of such low and mellow tones as to harmonize well with the profuse decorations of Spanish architecture.

Before we leave this "Sala de Isabel" don't fail to look carefully at that noble picture by Sebastian del Piombo "Christ Sinking Under the Cross." It has that large and simple style which this artist caught by his friendship with Michael Angelo. There is great depth and solemnity in the tone, the forms are grand and impressive. The head of Christ is majestic in its divine patience, and touches the heart by its tender expression of sorrow. To my mind this is one of the best representations of the suffering Lord in Italian art, and approaches as near as can be to the ideal of the God-Man which is enshrined in the hearts of his devout worshippers. "Yes" said the professor, "it is a noble picture, and as I stand before it a certain feeling of awe and pity comes stealing over me. What tenderness and love beams from those sad eyes, yet there is a calm heroism about the brow which seems to say 'Weep not for me but weep for yourselves and for your children.' I must acknowledge that there is a purity, an elevation, a high and sacred purpose about some of these great Italians of the religious school which pervades also the style of their treatment of forms, of draperies and their system of coloring, and compels us to give them the highest rank." At this moment the guardians called the hour to close, and we descended the massive stairway to the promenade of the Prado.

D. H.

THE AMERICAN ART ASSOCIATION.

THE ART UNION does not intend to be unjust to any one, and will always be ready to correct any misrepresentation of motive or deed that may be made in its columns.

The Aug-Sept. number contained some strictures on the prize scheme of the "American Art Association," which have been deemed by the proprietors unjust and not warranted by the actual facts.

The article in question was written only after due consideration of the subject with the light then at hand, which consisted mainly of the two circulars that had been issued and some remarks that were made by a friend of the firm who appeared to speak by authority, which was not the case; as they are perfectly friendly to the Academy. We are also assured that the title, viz: "the Am. Art Association" was assumed, not to gain any advantage from persons who were uninformed of the *personnel* of the Association, but only that the names of the proprietors might not be too prominent.

Also, that the expectation of the "undivided support" of the artists did not mean their exclusive support, but merely that they should respond with cordiality to the request for pictures; and that the holding of the exhibition at the same time of the Academy exhibition, was, owing to unavoidable circumstances, as it was at first intended to open in the early part of the winter.

We did not reflect on the permanent exhibition of the galleries, as that feature was only to be commended; for the more there are of such exhibitions the better it will be for each one and for the artists—we do not believe in the virtue of any monopoly of the Art business, either by the Academy or any other institution.

This prize scheme was discussed informally at the last meeting of the council of the Academy, and it was the prevailing opinion that the interests of the Academy would not be likely to be injured thereby—this does not agree with the anticipations expressed in our article, but the writer cheerfully defers to the better judgment of the council.—*Nemo Solus Sapit.*

THE BEAUTY OF MAN.

IT is a very curious fact that of all familiar things, we are least familiar with what is nearest to us all. We are surrounded by men and women but we know almost nothing of what they really look like. Very few of us know anything of the appearance of the human body, except as we learn it from pictures and statues. The most of our knowledge, indeed, comes to us by the way of the ancient Greeks and Romans.

We are all ready enough to acknowledge that man was made in the image of God; that in man's body is revealed the most perfect symmetry, the greatest perfection of form, but at the same time we treat it as if it were something vile, to be covered up, concealed from view—we scarcely dare to speak of it. This is certainly very irrational, not to say absurd.

There is nothing in the world so beautiful as the human body. In comparison with its exquisite lines and surfaces the sculptor finds everything poor and mean. No problem so fascinates the painter as the effort to represent its color and texture. The greatest artists of all times have had their greatest triumphs in their pictures or statues of undraped men and women. If it were not for them we could hardly know that the "body is better than raiment."

The Greeks were wise when they erected statues to the men who through "sobriety, temperance and chastity" brought their bodies into the highest state of beauty and efficiency. With us would not the cause of morality be promoted by having to appear as we really are, or as we have made ourselves, instead of as the tailors have made us? Would we not, perhaps, be inclined to reverence and respect ourselves more if we knew how beautiful a being a man might become, even here upon the earth? Let us applaud the artist who shows us the ideal man; the man who, though rarely seen, still may be found, almost as beautiful as ever among the Greeks.

L.